



UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Summary February 28, 2011

Meeting called to order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Joel Cockrell.

Introductions

Introductions of members and guests were made around the room.

Update from Upcounty Regional Services Center Staff

Catherine Matthews, Director, updated the Board on the following:

- On March 7th, Montgomery College will break ground for their new Bioscience Education Center at the Germantown campus.
- “HealthyMontgomery” is a new initiative to promote the social and environmental health of the county. A website has been created with data and information on topics related to the health and well being of the community and its residents <http://www.healthymontgomery.org/>. The Board will provide input for promoting the effort.
- There are numerous bus shelters that need more lighting. Board and guests were asked to report any shelters that could use more lighting and they will be considered.
- The Silver Spring Ice Skating Rink, located at the Corner of Fenton & Ellsworth Dr. on Veterans Plaza, is now open to the public! The extended hours for all County school holidays are 10:00 am to 11:00 pm.
- A community meeting to explain new laws that are set to go into effect in the spring will be held on Monday, March 7th, at 7:00 pm, at the Upcounty Regional Services Center. The laws will address: parking for heavy commercial and recreational vehicles, home-based businesses in residential neighborhoods, and the paving of residential front yards.
- A segment of the ICC is now open! The business outreach office for the ICC is willing to come out to any organization and talk about the new ICC. Their number is 410-537-1019.
- The Housing Initiative Partnership (HIP) office has moved from their small office to a larger space at the Upcounty Regional Services Center to accommodate the increasing number of requests for assistance with foreclosures. The services that HIP offers have become very popular and much needed in the community. Their new suite number 1500.

Update from the Police: Lt. Ron Hardy and Lt. Dom Fazio with Germantown’s 5th District Police reported on the recent string of robberies in the area. He also briefed the Board on the pro-life protests of the new abortion clinic in the area. The elderly rape suspect has not been caught yet. A composite was shared with the Board and guests.

Update from the County Council

Dale Tibbitts from Councilmember Marc Elrich’s office shared the following highlights:

- ZTA 10-15 re Airstrips in the Agriculture Reserves - The Council's Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee (PHED) voted two to one to support the zoning text amendment to limit airstrips in the Agricultural Reserve and to require that they be a minimum of 1,000 feet from a property line and not be paved.
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/pdf/zta/2011/20110308_17-03.pdf

Discussion with Councilmembers Craig Rice and Hans Riemer:

Councilmember Rice updated the Board on:

- The recent census data that shows how much Germantown has grown;
- The initiative to add a hospital in the Upcounty;
- Montgomery College's new Bioscience Education Center project;
- The many biotech companies that have made Montgomery County, and particularly the Upcounty region, their home (i.e. Qiagen, MedImmune, etc); and
- The new Business Development Council that should be helpful to the Department of Economic Development in focusing on how to turn the economy around in the county;
- The situation with the maintenance of effort situation and State Delegate Hixon's amendment to change the process for assessing penalties; and
- the recommended operating budget that the County Executive will soon send to the Council and the challenge in making sure that new policies and procedures are though through.

Councilmember Riemer introduced himself to the Board and discussed:

- Opportunities with this historic budget season;
- The need to develop a longer-term budget;
- The need for a larger commercial tax base in the county;
- The Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) which is the kind of solution needed to help attract new businesses to the county; and
- The efforts needed to create more jobs in Clarksburg and other areas of the upcounty.

Report from the Chairperson

- Council President Valerie Ervin's visit to the Board originally scheduled for tonight to discuss the county's budget structure is being rescheduled.
- The County Executive held his annual meeting with all county boards, committees and commissions and Mr. Cockrell expressed UCAB's comments:
 1. Maintaining the staff complement of the five Regional Service Centers at present size;
 2. Preserving the current size of the police force and fire services personnel;
 3. Urging the County to lobby our state delegates about targeted revenue enhancements such as a liquor tax increase; and

4. Talking about the fact that non-profits such as HELP groups who are asked by HHS to provide energy payments for families in need are required to pay county taxes on that energy when they are exempt from state taxes.
- The Chair discussed the Board's draft letter concerning economic development in the county. The letter was adopted by Board (moved by Robert Owolabi, seconded by Doug Noble) and will be sent to Executive Leggett with copies to Council members, Economic Development Director Steve Silverman, and Planning Director Francoise Carrier.

Committee and Liaison Reports

Land Use and Preservation Committee – No report.

Quality of Life Committee – No report.

Airpark Liaison Committee – No report.

Upcounty Regional Recreation Advisory Board Liaison - No report.

Dickerson Facilities Implementation Group (DFIG) – No report.

Speed Cameras Advisory Committee– No report.

Shady Grove Implementation Advisory Committee (SGIAG) – No report.

Permitting Services Advisory Committee –No report

Northern Region Recreation Advisory Board – No report

Smart Growth Initiative Implementation Group –No report

Community Concern:

Mr. Ed Clarke, representing a community group, "Community Partners for Public Safety," asked the Board to support keeping School Resource Officers (SROs) in the operating budget. The number of officers was reduced last year. The City of Gaithersburg will continue to fund the officers in county schools located within the City. Mr. Cockrell invited Mr. Clarke to attend the Board's upcoming meeting that will focus on the FY12 operating budget and this issue can be further discussed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Members present: Joel Cockrell, Bob Owolabi, Juan Cardenas, Andres Aviles, Heinz Bachmann, Brad Davis, Cherian Eapen, Andrew Einsmann, Jim King, Matthew Leaken, Kevin Linck, Doug Noble

Other Guests: Lisa Blick (Individual), John Blick (Individual), Kismet Talaat (Individual), Ed Clarke (Community Partners for Public Safety), Rosemary Arkoian (Greater Goshen Civic Association), Peggy

Dennis (Montgomery County Civic Federation), Robert Nelson (Greater Goshen Civic Association),
Donna Lowell (Individual)

Staff present: Catherine Matthews and Andrea Bush